Javanese Sufism and Prophetic Literature

Mohd Faizal MUSA
Institute Of Malay World and Civilization (ATMA)
The National University of Malaysia (UKM)
43600, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia
kajianakademikft@gmail.com

Abstract. Part of the "Islamic literature" furore in Indonesia is the discourse of "Prophetic Literature," founded by Abdul Hadi W.M. The background of "Prophetic Literature" is Sufism. Other ingredients that formulated "Prophetic Literature" are mysticism, "Javanese Sufism" and perennial philosophies concerned with spiritual experience and human effort to gain the love of God. The ambitious objective of "Prophetic Literature" is to form a healthy environment in society through the purification of the souls of the readers. It also aims to energize the spirit of the colonized people in the East through promoting good deeds and kindness whilst preventing corruption and wickedness. "Prophetic Literature" prioritized the human and re-positioned man as the Caliph of Allah. The fundamental and dominant theme of "Prophetic Literature" is monotheism. "Prophetic Literature" is not interested in any particular form, but it emphasizes traditional elements, such as the return to the "roots of local culture," including "Javanese Sufism," as it core sources. Similar to "Sufi literature," the appearance of "Prophetic Literature" is shown through the use of symbols. Authors are measured by their ability to compose symbols, and to send hidden meanings in their works.
Keywords: Javanese Sufism, Prophetic Literature, Islamic literature, mysticism, Indonesian literature, Santri, Abangan

INTRODUCTION

During the 1970s, Islamic literature broke out as a phenomenon in Indonesia. The phenomenon can be traced through active discourse on Islamic values in literature and the literary products themselves. One of the leading literary giants in Indonesia that participated in and contributed through the discussion was Abdul Hadi W.M., a notable poet and well-known academician in Indonesia. He received a PhD in philosophy from the University of Gajah Mada in 1971 and a second doctorate in literature from University Science of Malaysia in 1996. Previously he also served as editor of a tabloid named *Buana*, which published many literary essays in the 1980s. Abdul Hadi W.M. started his career as an author in the 1960s and is regarded as prominent in the genre of poetry and essays.

He is also active in translating literary pieces, particularly those related to "Sufism." As a poet he has received prizes from, among others, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia in 1979 and the South East Asia Write Award in 1985 (Eneste, 2001: 273–277). Abdul Hadi W.M. recommended the terms "Prophetic Arts" and "Prophetic Literature" in order to explain the idea of "transcendental arts." He also proposed another term, "Sufi Literature." In line with this, Abdul Hadi W.M. categorized himself with the "Angkatan 70" (block of writers during the 1970s), also referred to as "transcendental writers." It is important to note here that his chosen term "Prophetic Literature" is synonymous with "Transcendental Literature" proposed by another well-known writer, Kuntowijoyo. In fact, Abdul Hadi W.M.'s "Prophetic Literature" has no fundamental differences with the notion of "Transcendental Literature," but it does involve a number of differing aspects which will be described later. However, this paper is only interested in detailing "Prophetic Literature."

The difference between "Prophetic Literature" and "Transcendental Literature" mentioned above is that the notion of "Prophetic Literature" is underpinned by the teachings of Sufism. Hence, the idea of "Prophetic Literature" is a little different to the idea of "Transcendental Literature" that is based on "the philosophy of structuralism" (Kuntowijoyo, 2001). To facilitate understanding of the discussion, this essay is divided into topics and is broken down as follows: a) Islamic mysticism as the pillar of "Prophetic Literature"; b) the origin of Sufi literature; c) the connection between Javanese Sufism and Islamic mysticism in which the definition of santri (religious and orthodox students) and abangan (Javanese aristocrats that practice a syncretic version of Islam) will be explained; d) the idea of "Prophetic Literature"; and e) the characteristics of "Prophetic Literature" which will be broken down into several sub-topics as follows: I) the writer's personal background; II) the theme of the stories; III) the characterization; IV) the purpose; V) the form; VI) the impact; and VII) final conclusions.

As mentioned before, there is a common similarity between "Transcendental Literature" proposed by Kuntowijoyo and Abdul Hadi W.M.'s "Prophetic Literature." Kuntowijoyo (1982: 4) suggested a "spiritual" antidote to liberate modern man from a variety of shortcomings and moral issues. He also recommends "spiritual experience" as a "way out" for humans from the entrapment of a "materialistic world that glorifies materialism and technology." Abdul Hadi W.M. (1992: 13) praised

Kuntowijoyo's view and, according to him, Kuntowijoyo's view is consistent with the view of Sayyed Hossein Nasr. Sufism is suggested as an alternative to liberate modern man from the blindness of divinity and spiritual emptiness. Significantly, this is the fundamental point of difference between "Transcendental Literature" by Kuntowijoyo and "Prophetic Literature" by Abdul Hadi W.M. Before detailing the notion of "Prophetic Literature" some issues on Sufism will be discussed here. It will then be linked to the teaching of "Kejawen" or "Javanese Sufism." Javanese Sufism should be understood well as it appears consciously in the works of Islamic literature in Indonesia, especially in the works of Kuntowijoyo (2000) and Abdul Hadi W.M. himself.

ISLAMIC MYSTICISM AS THE PILLAR OF PROPHETIC LITERATURE

Before discussing the idea of "Prophetic Literature," it is important to touch a bit on Sufism and its teachings. There are many definitions of Sufism but, according to Harun Nasution (1978: 960), the most used definition explains that the word Sufism is derived from the word "suf," which was the fur robe worn by members of Sufi orders in the early era of the teachings of Sufism. This robe is among the early features of Sufism. An Indonesian literary scholar and cleric, Hamka (1980: 83) listed down many meanings of Tasawuf (another term used to explain Islamic mysticism) but, as is mentioned by Reynold Nicholson (1987: 25), one of the scholars studying Sufism, there is no clear definition that can be accepted as the "doctrine of Sufism is a complex reality." However, Nicholson assumed that Sufism is "a way to get to God." The term "mystical knowledge," for example, is also widely used to describe Sufism. According to Annemarie Schimmel (1978: 5), a famous scholar in this field, there are two kinds of mystical teaching. The first type is "mysticism of infinity," what she referred as understanding "the reality of God as infinite and absolute." This type of mysticism believes that man comes from God and is able to return and to blend with the Lord. Those who hold to "mysticism of infinity" also believe that God is free from time and space. God is even said to reside in the universe and human beings. Such mystical teachings are also referred to as "mystical union." The second type is "mysticism of personality" where man is viewed as a slave and God as a superior. There is a difference between man and God

in which God is transcendent and larger than any other. Such mystical belief is known as "Transcendental Tasawuf." The teachings of Sufism are said to appear at the end of the reign of Umayyad Caliphate. This doctrine serves to remind the Muslims of the "hereafter" and is concerned with the growth of faith. The teachings of Sufism also emphasize certain principles to control or impede worldly desires. It should also be stressed that the notions of Tasawuf and Sufism are more or less the same. The difference is only in the name or term. According to Muhsin Labib (2004: 26), the terms Sufism, Irfan, Tasawuf and Islamic mysticism all have one meaning. These terms are used to refer to a group of Prophet Muhammad SAW's disciples that were poor, homeless and resided at the Nabawi mosque in Medina; they wore shuuf (or wool fabric). They served their time diligently to foster a relationship with God.

Among the fundamental teachings of Islamic mysticism or Sufism[1] is that the love of God cannot be achieved by using a logical or rational approach. Only through the love of God can "intimacy with God" be achieved. The teachings of Sufism advocate that the worship of God is most important and people should set themselves free from any other worship. The only reasonable and equitable act of genuflection is towards God. Javad Nurbaksh (1999: 1–25) mentions that only by freeing oneself from the thralldom of this impermanent life can one reach the love of God. By this meaning, the impact on Muslims is that they must liberate themselves from the feeling of love or attachment to family and worldly belongings, as the only proper worship and priority is God. Nurbaksh also stresses that, in the teachings of Sufism, God can only be achieved and known through love and the condition cannot be explained by logic or any rational methodology. Nurbaksh also lists standard features of Sufis: that they consistently worship Allah, emphasize their morality, avoid doing bad deeds and are tolerant towards other religious believers. There are many other teachings of Sufism which cannot be revealed here. As was pointed out earlier, this essay is interested in discussing "Javanese Sufism" as the background philosophy for one of the main discourses in Islamic literature in Indonesia: "Prophetic Literature." This study does not intend to elaborate on the question of mysticism and Sufism in depth. However, it is appropriate to describe here some of the teachings of Sufism in order to facilitate discussion. For example, Abdul Hadi W.M., as the thinker behind "Prophetic Literature," also describes briefly the teachings of Sufism in many of his works. According to the

teachings of Sufism, among others, he stresses that everything is derived from God as the Creator and the Almighty. Because everything in this world, including man himself, comes from God, then all the actions and the law of cause and effect must also be pegged back to God. In the teachings of Sufism the way to bring people to their Creator is by returning back to God as a principal source of life and love, or to know God through the experience of heart and soul, as well as determination to explore the spiritual experience. God is seen as a source of love. Being close to God or "to be united with God" is regarded as an achievement of great love. Surely, the love from the correct "source" will then help people in all their rules of life including how to manage their daily affairs. Abdul Hadi W.M. (1989b: 4–5) believes that love (God) is intended as a source of religious and moral rules.

The question of love (as the source of all events), union with God, or the experience of exploring the spiritual nature is very dominant in many Sufistic works. This issue is also very familiar in the "Prophetic Literature" or "Sufi literature."

THE ORIGIN OF SUFI LITERATURE

The spread of Sufism has prompted the writing of books about it and some have been expressed through literary genres, specifically poetry. These literary works came to be known as "Sufistic works" or "Sufi literature." According to Baharuddin Ahmad (1992: VIII), in the preface of a book bringing together essays on the subject," "Sufi literature" is a constituent of Islamic literature.

According to Reynold Nicholson (1987: 98), the literature of Sufism is most likely to use the emblem and symbol. Members of Sufi teachings believe that symbolism is the only way to hide the mysterious teachings of Sufism. The members of the Sufis also believe the use of symbols in the works help authors to translate their spiritual experience better. Nicholson's view is very important to understand here, as the use of symbols is to be one of the principles of "Prophetic Literature," as will be seen later.

In "Prophetic Literature" the question of beauty and truth as the foundation of Islamic literature is closely related to "the spiritual experience of the author." As should be understood here, readers who do not

understand or have not reached the level of "spiritual experience" of the author may face difficulty in appreciating the works of the Sufis.

Titus Burckhardt adds more perspective on Sufism (1989: 79); to him the "Sufistic Art" holds on to "the beauty that comes from God because God is the creator of beauty, and that God is beautiful and loves beauty." According to Titus, the "essence of truth and beauty in Sufi literature" is when God is referred to as "the source of all truth and beauty." Therefore the aspects of beauty in Sufi literature refer specifically to the "spiritual experience" (Baharuddin, 1992: IX).

Abdul Hadi W.M. (1989b: 5), as a major figure behind "Prophetic Literature," stresses that the relation between mysticism and literature has sparked an amazing blend of truth and beauty in writings. He added that, to achieve the "inner beauty" in the works of "Sufi literature," the writers need to attend to three basic conditions. First, the wealth of knowledge, especially knowledge of God, which in turn means the science of monotheism. This means that not all authors are qualified to write a Sufistic literary piece. Second, he sees the seriousness of the author in complying with the Sharia as a basis for producing works of "Sufi literature." These conditions imply that any author that ignores the teachings of religion and transgresses the established rulings of Islam cannot be accepted as the author of "Sufi literature." Thirdly, both of the conditions mentioned above must be equipped with the prior proviso that "Sufi literature" writers always need to be with God whilst dodging Satan, which consistently leads humans to commit sin. This can be achieved by avoiding and hindering worldly desire.

The requirements that have been placed by Abdul Hadi W.M. logically indicate that "Sufi literature" can only be produced by Sufistic scholars. "Sufi literature" also found its place in the Malay world. Due to the spread of Sufism in the Malay region, Malay Sufi literature was also developed, allowing Sufi writers like Abdul Rauf Singkel, Abdul Samad al Palembani, Hamzah Fansuri and, later on, Amir Hamzah to position their own Sufistic works (Osman Bakar, 2003: 339–376).[2] The Sufi writers in the region have produced works that contain elements of intellectual knowledge. Syed Muhammad Naguib Al Attas accentuates that these elements of intellectual and knowledge are the core matrix of "Sufi literature" in the Malay world (Hamdan Hassan, 1992: 65–66).[3]

THE TEACHINGS OF SUFISM AND JAVANESE SUFISM

Warm acceptance towards Islam among the people in the Malay world has enabled the teaching of Sufism to grow. In the context of Indonesia, especially Java, dissemination of knowledge of Sufism has brought forth another unique fascia called Islam Kejawen or Javanese Sufism. This particular philosophy of Javanese Sufism was developed through the works of literature.

To understand what is meant by the "Javanese Sufism" teachings, it should be mentioned here that the spread of Islam to the world after the death of the Prophet Muhammad SAW had to undergo two forms of approach: a non-compromising and a compromising approach. The non-compromising approach was experienced by the Middle Eastern and Western Asian regions. Dakwah Islamiyyah, or the propagation of Islamic teachings, was confronted physically and the dividing line between Islam and non-Islam is clear and unequivocal. The line of separation is the separation between the elements of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islam) and Islam without any compromise. This means that the respective developments of Islamic and pagan customs do not coincide. Non-Islamic customs were forced to be abandoned and eliminated. The terms and concepts of iman (Islamic faith), musyrik (unbelievers) and kufur (blasphemy) have been used in spreading Islam. The second approach was a compromising one. It has been used to spread Islam in Africa, Central Asia and the Malay region. This compromising approach means that Islam was "discovered" or "integrated" with the teachings or traditions of different cultures, sometimes even those that seem contrary to Islamic identity. To ease the acceptance of Islam among the region's people, the indigenous pre-Islamic culture was not fully removed. As a matter of fact, pre-Islamic customs and culture are practised simultaneously. This assimilation and tolerance method produced a kind of "syncretical version of Islam."

According to Simuh (1995: 155–163), the syncretical approach in spreading Islam in the region has produced "a unique fusion of Islamic teachings". He added that the Sufism which was developed in the archipelago is a product of an olio between Islam and local mysticism. Thus, Islam emanates in the region through its willingness to compromise and blend the local traditions.

"SANTRI" AND "ABANGAN": RELATION TO LITERATURE

The admission of Islam in Java has been confronted by and has competed strongly with the existing Hindu culture and religion. The "Javanese Hindu" tradition is maintained and guarded by two groups. The first group is the "priyayi" or "Javanese aristocrats that reside in traditional palace," which became a thick barrier for Islamic missionaries propagating Islam. The second group is the "wong cilik" or "ordinary people" who believe in the teachings of animism and paganism. The two groups have clashed with Islamic preachers. The process of collision between these groups and the Islamic missionaries has given birth to a new hybrid known in Indonesia as "santri" (the religious students) and "abangan" (the motley stratum in society).

Zaini Muchtarom (1988: 2), who studied this matter, described how the emergence of Islam in Java was much helped by the kiyai (priest) and ulama (Muslim clerics) who were referred to by the santri (religious students) as their teachers and guides. The influence of this group was initially limited to the trading town on the coast before it spread to inland areas of Java. After the Islamic missionaries penetrated rural areas in Java, more pesantren (religious boarding schools) were established. This helped the formation of a devout Muslim community. This group is characterized by Muchtarom as "the boarding school upbringing that can provide religious education in Islam and read the verses of the Quran." Yet, at the same time, in certain areas of Java, the spread of Islam faced difficulties and resistance because of strong Hindu influences. Thus the missionary effort of compromise with the local culture was presented by Muslim scholars at that time.

In detailing more about "santri" and "abangan," Zaini Muchtarom describes how an orientalist named Clifford Geertz in his work *The Religion of Java* divided Javanese people into three groups: santri, abangan and priyayi. Santri and abangan, according to him, are distinguished based on their religious behaviour. Religious school teachers in pesantren are called kiyai. Another term for santri is "putihan" (based on their white skull cap) and after performing the pilgrimage or haj in Mecca they are called as kaji. According to Muchtarom, santri is a cluster of pupil studying at pesantren, pondok, rangkang meunasahs or surau (all terms refer to religious schools or classes) and most of them are considered "devout Muslim." An abangan rarely worships according to Islamic beliefs,

though his views and mind is Muslim. An abangan is theoretically Muslim but practically still holding partly to Buddhism, Hinduism or other indigenous beliefs. This occurs because the pre-Islamic influence is so strong in them that the mixture of Islam with the local culture produced a new and unique hodgepodge between Javanese traditional customs and Islamic teachings. Later on, proponents of this doctrine are referred to as abangan.

According to Suwardi Endraswara (2003: 72–87), the mystical form of kejawen (Javanese Sufism) is featured, among other methods, through puppets show and literature. This is what it meant by "the culture of compromise." The compromise occurred when the preaching of Islamic faith was disseminated through the local culture. The compromise has allowed the teachings of Islam to penetrate Javanese society at the district level, especially the priyayi. By using plenty of local culture as tools of propagation, many of them embraced Islam. But the priyayi still maintain specific customs of paganism or Hindu rituals while practising the teachings of Islam. The use of shadow puppet performance to propagate Islam has enabled Islam to seep into parts of the Java community. This approach is associated with Sunan Kalijaga, one of nine clerics called the Wali Songo (Nine Saints). In addition to the use of shadow puppets, the spread of Islam among the Hindus was done with a variety of literary writings known as suluk. The blend of Islam and their own tradition is reflected in classical Javanese works such as *Kitab Bonang, Suluk Sukarso, Suluk Wijil, Cabolek, Centini* and *Hidayat Jati*. The subsequent collapse of the Majapahit's empire led to the palace chiefs, including Javanese priyayi, losing their status in society. This group began to turn to the saints and religious teachers to gain attention and review their status. The Kingdom of Majapahit was replaced by the Sultanate of Demak, which was backed by religious teachers. Efforts to propagate Islam continued using the vehicle of art, including literature. This has resulted in the teachings of Islam absorbing Javanese Sufism elements. Mystical literature and literature associated with the teachings of "kejawen mysticism" have grown rapidly in Java, and have helped Islam to be more acceptable in Java.[4]

Simuh also cites the views of Clifford Geertz, saying "the stream of Javanese mysticism" and his followers "abangan" have been accepted as a branch or school of Islam in Java. According to Simuh, the teachings of Javanese Sufism and the Islamic teachings have some basic similari-

ties. There are also mystical teachings in existing Javanese beliefs. The first type is called mysticism of infinity, for example traditional Javanese dogma stated that "*lir sarah aneng lautan*" (the people are like bubbles in the ocean). The second type is mysticism of personality. It is also present in Javanese beliefs and can be traced through an idiom "*hubungan kawala dengan Gusti*" (the relationship between human and Creator). Simuh (1995: 37–50) also explains that the first type of mysticism was professed by many authors of Sufi literature, including Ibn Arabi, Hamzah Fansuri and Shamsuddin Pase. The second type was practised by Imam al Ghazali. It must be mentioned here that the first type of mysticism, adhered to by Ibn Arabi, Hamzah Fansuri and Shamsuddin Pase, is considered controversial and is rejected by a large number of Muslim scholars. It is also regarded as being deviant from Islam.[5]

THE IDEA OF PROPHETIC LITERATURE

As discussed before, the nascency of "Prophetic Literature" is underpinned by the teachings of Sufism. "Prophetic Literature" is also indirectly related to the teaching of Javanese Sufism and it will be described in this section. After Indonesia's independence, Javanese mystic society viewed Indonesian-Muslim spiritual values as being smudged by the Western culture from the Dutch colonization. The followers of Javanese Sufism also believe that the spiritual aspects of Javanese culture such as Javanese Sufism can be restored again to clear all the negative aspects of Western culture. In their opinion, Western culture is filled with love of materialism and is supported by secularism (Simuh, 1995: 64). This means that, in addition to the teachings of Sufism as therapy, the teachings of Javanese Sufism are also taken as supplementary guidelines to reach "happiness in life."

The situation above was mainly emerging in the 1970s and is often associated with "the writers of the 1970s" or the "transcendental writers." Abdul Hadi W.M. was in this group of authors. The authors of this era can be clearly identified by two indications as follows.

First, there is a tendency to use symbols in their work and this is not regarded as outdated but seen as an attempt to "return to the roots of tradition" (Abdul Hadi W.M., 2000a: 803). Poets from the same class, for example Sutardji Calzoum Bachri, state that their effort to "revert to the roots of tradition" makes them very different from previous writers

(Abdul Hadi W.M., 1999: 4). By repeating the slogan "back to the roots of tradition," Sutardji suggested what he called "lending from the tradition." By this, he recommended "the tradition" as a source of inspiration and starting point of creation of creative works.

There are three methods of "home-coming" used by the authors to "revert to the roots of tradition." The first method is to take cultural traditions for experimentation in their works. The second method is to promote ethnic and regional literature (such as the literature of Java, Bali, Sunda and Sasak) in which the special characteristics of this ethnic and regional literature was brought into the mainstream literature of Indonesia. The third method is to take the spiritual traditions of the great religions, including Islam, to be applied in their literary works. Most of the time, all the methods are used and overlapped by the writers in their work; for example, Kuntowijoyo's works are composed with the second and third methods simultaneously, namely Javanese cultural background combined with the spiritual teachings of Islam. In fact, even Javanese Sufism has become a source of the work (Abdul Hadi W.M., 1999: 5–19).[6]

Second, their inclination towards mysticism or Tasawuf means the value of spiritualism can be easily traced in their works. Abdul Hadi W.M. classified such works by Danarto, Kuntowijoyo and Sutardji Calzoum Bachari in the "transcendental writers" group. This phenomenon is referred to as "relijus," "sufistik" and "spiritualistic." Their obsession had been followed by the later generation of writers such as Afrizal Malna, Hamid Jabbar, Kriapur, D. Zawawi Imron, Emha Ainun Nadjib, Linus Suryadi A.G. and Heru Emka (Abdul Hadi W.M., 2000a: 804–805).

These symptoms of "religious literature," according to Abdul Hadi W.M., were driven by at least three reasons: the reluctance to embrace the materialistic nature of Western ideology, the "spiritual anxiety" when social conditions decline, and the international political climate, as the 1970s is referred to as an unstable era. Abdul Hadi W.M. (1987a: 5) states that this is the background colour or the onset of the birth of "Prophetic Literature."

According to Abdul Hadi W.M., "Prophetic Literature" is "literary work that was founded with social and transcendental dimensions in its creation." He said that, while human life in this world must be attributed to the Creator, this should also be reflected in literary works. The same idea should be suggested in literary works to help readers get closer to

God. As the "Prophetic Literature" refers back to God, it is expected to make a contribution to humanity by restoring self-esteem and its role as the representative of God on this earth. The below quotation highlights some of the essence of "Prophetic Literature":

> Prophetic Literature is the source of recovery of human identity and the cause of transcendent possibilities. Therefore, it is not just referring to the earth, but concurrent with that, brings us to the sky through the deepest subconscious. Because in our hearts there is a window to see God, as the holy verses state. (Abdul Hadi W.M., 1987b: 11)

Based on the above paragraph and argument, there is no doubt that "Prophetic Literature" is fuelled by the teachings of Sufism.

FEATURES OF PROPHETIC LITERATURE

"Prophetic Literature" shows some specific features. Further discussion will reveal the characteristics.

a. The Author

It is significant to note here that Abdul Hadi W.M. (1988: 7–8), in a discussion on Islamic literature at the Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, explained to the audience that "Prophetic Literature" is not limited to Muslim writers only. To him, non-Muslim writers can also compose and get involved in "Prophetic Literature." He named non-Muslim writers such as T.S. Eliot, Akiya Yutaka, Choo Byun Hwa, Goethe, Walt Whitman, Rabindranath Tagore and Khalil Gibran as "Prophetic Literature" writers, in line with Jalaluddin Rumi, Attar, Ibn Sina, Iqbal, Hamzah Fansuri, Salah Abdul Sabur and Ali Ahmad Said (1987b: 11). However, Abdul Hadi W.M. also asserted a firm requirement for "Prophetic Literature." He said that, in order for the literary work to be accepted as "prophetic," the literary works need to put forward three basic facts that have been pegged by the Qur'an, namely:

i. God is the source of cause and effect. Everything that happens in the world should make people remember the source, namely God.

ii. The act of compliance to Sharia (Islamic law) is something that is born of intuition and iman (faith). This means that people are aware of the fact that as human beings they will comply with any commands from God. He added that man need to dive into himself to know God.

iii. Every event that occurs in a human life is a blessing in disguise. Humans should have the awareness, wisdom and determination to train themselves to look for the hidden meanings. According to him, to prove the existence of God, man must be able to "do transcendence" (Abdul Hadi W.M., 1987c: 11).

As mentioned, Abdul Hadi W.M. recognized "prophetic spirit" in the works of authors who are not Muslims. But in order to accept the "prophetic spirit" he also set specific criteria for the theme and characters portrayed in "Islamic Prophetic Literature."

b. The Theme

For the theme of "Prophetic Literature," Abdul Hadi W.M. (1987d: 11) puts the oneness of God as the core of the discourse. He cites verse 53 of Surat al Fushilat from the Qur'an. Abdul Hadi W.M.'s view is quoted here:

> The most fundamental theme in "Prophetic Literature" is the oneness of God in nature and history, in the depths of human self and its words. It delivers the message that conveyed by God in His holy book. We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth. Doth not thy Lord suffice, since He is Witness over all things? (al Fushilat, 53)

c. The Character and the Characterization

Characters portrayed in "Prophetic Literature" should be characters that have patience and forbearance in dealing with tests and trials in life and at the same time believe in destiny. The characters appearing in creative works should always connect themselves to the Divine. For example, to be free from suffering and testing, figures in a novel would choose to approach the Creator. According to Abdul Hadi W.M., these characters exist in the novels of the Russian writer Dostoevsky. According to him, Dostoevsky's novels developed strong characters who face the problems of life. Abdul Hadi W.M. claims that the credibility of the characters in Dostoevsky's works is equal to that of the prophets in Islam. The characters in his works are highlighted as having natures of patience and perseverance. In particular, when tested with a variety of tests and disasters, the characters choose to be persistent in spite of difficulties and obstacles, just like the prophets in Islam such as Joseph, Jacob, Moses and Jonah. Thus the characters that appear in "Prophetic Literature" should be

"humans who realize that life is hard, filled with trials and obstacles and face bravely any disaster in life as a test of the Prophets Joseph, Jacob, Moses and Jonah."

d. The Objectives

According to Abdul Hadi W.M., "Prophetic Literature" has a clear task or purpose. First, "Prophetic Literature" should manage to form a humane person (in this case the reader), so then, as cause and effect, people can form a good environment in society. The purification of the soul in oneself is essential before making major changes at the external level. This is "because the great changes cannot happen without the reformation first occurring in the human spirit."

The second objective is that "Prophetic Literature" has an important role in awakening a nation that had been conquered and colonized by returning back to their soul and spiritual path. Abdul Hadi W.M. mentions that the oppressed nations, especially in the East, are rich in cultural life and should be fighting back the Western grip with prowess (1987a: 6–8).

The third objective of "Prophetic Literature" should be promoting a genuine civilization, an alternative to the "civilization derived from material." He added that "Prophetic Literature" should function to refresh the doctrine of "amar makruf wa nahi mungkar" (promoting good deed and kindness and at the same time preventing corruption and wickedness) in society. Finally, Abdul Hadi W.M. outlines the major task of "Islamic Prophetic Literature" is to bring people back to the fundamental teachings of faith, the teachings of "La Ila ha illallah" (there is no other god but Allah). This doctrine should be emphasized in literary works as an effort to awaken the Muslims to the fact of man, and his role as vicegerent of Allah on earth.

e. The Form

As an important figure of "Prophetic Literature," Abdul Hadi W.M. did not set a specific form. However, he stressed the use of symbols to explain "the hidden truth." This suggests similarities between the "Prophetic Literature" and "Transcendental Literature" proposed by Kuntowijoyo as mentioned earlier. Abdul Hadi W.M. (1987c.: 11) was referring, among others, to the opinion of a famous French philosopher who converted to Islam, name Roger Garaudy. Garaudy believes all things that happen in this world are an outward sign that should be re-

construed to excavate the real meaning. Thus, in the work of "Prophetic Literature" the symbols and signs are the "beauty and charm" that need to be interpreted and enjoyed.

Abdul Hadi W.M. stressed that the appearance of these symbols should not be interpreted arbitrarily. The symbols appearing in literary works should be interpreted with care, and these interpretations are derived from the incident in daily life itself. This is especially true when the symbolism involves the spiritual experience of the authors. Abdul Hadi W.M.'s words are quoted to complete the above argument:

> In literary works, they use different analogies, rich in symbols and imagery that are taken from nature, everyday life, historical stories and legends that live among the Muslim community. All the symbols and images that they developed are so rich in spiritual and mystical experiences. The symbols that have been crafted require interpretation and cannot be taken literally, that is why for example, poetry has double layered meanings. (Abdul Hadi W.M., 1989b: 5–6)

According to Abdul Hadi W.M., he is pleased with the work that has a symbol in which the author chose not to "show signs of Islam explicitly" (1988: 7–8).

f. The Impact

As part of the greater "Islamic literature," "Prophetic Literature" asserts that literary works should be able to have positive effect not only for the author but also for the audience reading them. Abdul Hadi W.M. quoted Iqbal, a Sufi poet from Pakistan, to detail what he meant by the "positive impact through transcendence experience." The "spiritual experience" displayed by using the approach of "Prophetic Literature" "will have a beneficial effect on humans as well as authors or readers." This example can occur when the audiences were brought back close to God by reminding them the origin of the human (1987d: 11).

In his writings, Abdul Hadi W.M. is actively defending "Sufi literature" as an effort to oppose "secular literature" (literature that is not centred on Islam). This example can be seen as Abdul Hadi W.M.'s description of "Sufi literature" and "Prophetic Literature" is not only concerned with mystical experience but is also related to social aspects. Abdul Hadi W.M. confirmed "Prophetic Literature" should not be equated with "realism" in terms of "the path taken" to improve social conditions. He brought examples of the works of Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Danarto

as comparison. Danarto is categorized as a "Transcendental Literature" writer, while Pramoedya is an Indonesia author who uses the approach of socialist realism in his works. Both sides have their own approach to develop aspects of humanity in society. In fact, according to Abdul Hadi W.M., the difference here is the big point between communist and Islamic art (1988: 7–8) as "Islamic Literature" sets out to purify the condition of societies from social problems within the human soul itself (1987e: 5). Only with clear souls can the social problems be cleared from human life.

"Prophetic Literature" is often said to distract readers from the sacred message. In defending the use of symbols in literary works Abdul Hadi W.M. says the symbols used in the prophetic works are not intended to cover the truth. In fact, the use of these symbols allows the reader to explore the meaning behind it and through this process "discovers the realities of others" such as the "inner reality" or "the reality of the soul." Strictly speaking, the symbol used is "not to conceal or to disguise the truth or reality." Instead, it presents more "humane reality, including the reality of his inner spiritual reality" (1984: 4).

To strengthen his points, he gives examples from the greatest Sufi works. Abdul Hadi W.M. (1986: 10) argues that "Prophetic Literature" does not ignore social aspects. "Sufi literature" is not only limited to talking about the soul but is also rich with advice, moral guidance and criticism towards the worsening political and social situation. This is because the reality outside is not underpinned by the teachings of iman (faith). "Sufi literature" is also encouraging the persistence of human endeavour in life and not just simply surrendering to fate. He brings examples of the work of Rumi as he is "against Jabariyah" that "those who believe that everything in life has been determined" and "do not have to endeavor to change it" (1989b: 4).

CONCLUSION

During the 1970s the Indonesian literature scene was hit by the "Islamic literature" phenomenon. One of the trendy discourses at that time was "Prophetic Literature" or "Sufi literature." In terms of its fundamental philosophy, "Prophetic Literature" got its ideas from Sufism. It was also formulated by the teachings of mysticism, "Javanese Sufism" and perennial philosophy, which are very much concerned with spiritual experi-

ence and efforts to receive the love of God. Among the main aims of "Prophetic Literature" is the formation of a good environment in society through changes in the souls of the readers. It also aims to restore the spirit of the colonized people while promoting good deeds and kindness and at the same time preventing corruption and wickedness. "Prophetic Literature" also stresses the re-positioning of man as the Caliph of Allah. The most fundamental and dominant theme of "Prophetic Literature" is monotheism. "Prophetic Literature" is not interested in any particular form, but it emphasizes traditional elements such as the return to the "roots of local culture," including "Javanese Sufism" teachings as a source. The beauty of "Prophetic Literature" is regarded in "the prophetic sharing of spiritual experience," in which the author seeks to show the readers the "Reality of Truth": that is Allah SWT. Just like "Sufi literature" the appearance of "Prophetic Literature" is meaningful and is shown through the use of symbols. Characters featured are the strong, courageous, honourable and pious characters. "Prophetic Literature" also celebrates freedom of imagination on condition that freedom is not contrary to Sharia (rulings of Islam). The characteristics of the authors are highly focused, although a non-Muslim writer's works can also be recognized as "prophetic." However, "Islamic Prophetic Literature" demands the author to work closely with the Lord and at all time be conscious of the rulings of Islamic law. This is "evidence" of "proximity to God." The authors also need to improve their ability to compose symbols and succeed in signifying the meanings in their works.

References

Ahmad, Baharudin. "Sastra Melayu." In *Ensiklopedia Tematis Spiritualitas Islam.* Ed. Syed Hossein Nasr. Bandung: Mizan, 2003.

Ahmad, Baharudin. *Sastera Sufi.* Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1992.

Al Attas, Syed Muhammad Naguib. *Islam Dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu: Suatu Mukadimah Mengenai Peranan Islam Dalam Peradaban Sejarah Melayu-Indonesia, dan Kesannya Dalam Sejarah Pemikiran, Bahasa dan Kesusasteraan Melayu.* Petaling Jaya: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, 1990.

Arberyy, Arthur John. *Sufism An Account of the Mystics of Islam.* London: George Allen Limited London, 1950.

Atjeh, Abu Bakar. *Pengantar Sejarah Sufi dan Tasawuf.* Bandung: Penerbitan Tjerdas, 1962.

Bakar, Osman. "Tasawuf Di Dunia Melayu-Indonesia." In *Ensiklopedia Tematis Spiritualitas Islam.* Ed. Syed Hossein Nasr. Bandung: Mizan, 2003. 339–376.

Burckhardt, Titus. *Falsafah Kesusasteraan dan Seni Halus.* Trans. Baharudin Ahmad. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1989.

Endraswara, Suwardi. *Mistik Kejawen: Sinkretisme, Simbolisme dan Sufisme Dalam Budaya Spiritual Jawa.* Jogjakarta: Penerbit Narasi, 2003.
Eneste, Pamusuk. *Buku Pintar Sastra Indonesia.* Jakarta: Kompas, 2001.
Ghina, Qasim. *Tarikh Tassawufil Islam.* Cairo: Maktab Nahdah al Misriyyah, 1970.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. "Angkatan 70 Dalam Sastra Indonesia." *Sumber Terpilih Sejarah Sastra Indonesia Abad XX.* Ed. Kratz E Ulrich. Jakarta: Gramedia, 2000a: 803–805.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. "Aspek Sosial Sastra Sufi." *Pelita.* 21 Jan. 1987e: 5.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. "Kembali Ke Akar Tradisi Sastra Transendental Dan Kecenderungan Sufistik Kepengarangan Di Indonesia.". *Jurnal Ulumul Quran* 2.3 (1992): 3–13.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. "Pesantren Tasawuf Dan Sastra." *Majalah Amanah.* Sept. 1989a: 83.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. "Prosa Indonesia Dan Spiritualisme." *Berita Buana.* 14 Feb. 1984: 4.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. "Sastra Profetik, Kreativitas Dan Pengembangannya." *Pelita.* 15 Apr. 1987a: 5.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. "Sastra Sufi, Aktualitas Dan Relevansinya." *Pelita.* 24 Mar. 1986: 10.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. "Semangat Profetik Sastra Sufi Dan Jejaknya Dalam Sastra Modern." *Banjarmasin Post.* 23 Jun. 1987b: 11.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. "Semangat Profetik Sastra Sufi Dan Jejaknya Dalam Sastra Modern." *Banjarmasin Post.* 24 Jun. 1987c: 11.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. "Semangat Profetik Sastra Sufi Dan Jejaknya Dalam Sastra Modern." *Banjarmasin Post.* 25 Jun. 1987d: 11.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. "Semua Karya Seni Bersifat Relijus." *Kompas.* 23 Nov. 1988: 7–8.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. "Tasawuf Dan Kesusastraan." *Berita Buana.* 7 Feb. 1989b: 4–5.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. *Islam Cakrawala Estetik dan Budaya.* Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2000b.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. *Kembali Ke Akar Kembali Ke Sumber: Esei-Esei Sastra Profetik Dan Sufistik.* Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1999.
Hadi W.M, Abdul. *Tasawuf Yang Tertindas.* Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001.
Hamka. *Tasauf: Perkembangan dan Pemurniannya.* Jakarta: Nurul Islam, 1980.
Hassan, Hamdan. "Kesan Pemikiran Ahli-Ahli Sufi Dalam Penulisan Sastera Melayu Di Nusantara." In *Sastera Sufi.* Ed. Ahmad Baharudin. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1992.
Kuntowijoyo. "Saya Kira Kita Memerlukan Juga Sebuah Sastra Transendental." *Berita Buana.* 21 Dec. 1982: 4.
Kuntowijoyo. *Khotbah di Atas Bukit.* Jogjakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 2000.
Kuntowijoyo. *Muslim Tanpa Masjid.* Bandung: Mizan, 2001.
Labib, Muhsin. *Mengurai Tasawuf Irfan Dan Kebatinan.* Jakarta: Penerbit Lentera, 2004.
Lings, Martin. *Ada Apa Dengan Sufi.* Jogjakarta: Pustaka Sufi, 2004.
Muchtarom, Zaini. *Santri dan Abangan Di Jawa.* Jakarta: Indonesian Netherlands Cooperation in Islamic Studies, 1988.
Muhammad, Thoyibi. Khisbiyah Yayah, and Aly Abdullah. *Prolog, Sinergi Agama dan Budaya Lokal.* Surakarta: Muhamadiyyah University Press, 2003.
Nasr, Sayyed Hossein. *Ensiklopedia Tematis Spiritualitas.* Bandung: Mizan, 2003.

Nasr, Sayyed Hossein. *Ideals and Realities of Islam.* New York: Delmar, 1967.

Nasr, Sayyed Hossein. *Knowledge and the Sacred.* New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981.

Nasution, Harun. *Ensiklopedia Islam.* Jakarta: Departemen Agama Jakarta, 1978.

Nicholson, Reynold Alleyne. *Tasawuf: Menguak Cinta Ilahiah.* Trans. A Nashir Budiman. Jakarta: Rajawali Pres, 1987.

Noer, Kautsar Azhari. *Ibn al-Arabi.* Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995.

Nurbaksh, Javad. *Ciri-ciri Khas Utama Sufisme Dalam Periode Awal Islam.* Trans. Gafna Raizha Wahyudi. Jogjakarta: Pustaka Sufi, 1999.

Purwadi. *Tasawuf Jawa.* Jogjakarta: Penerbit Narasi, 2003.

Sadi Hutomo, Suripan. *Sinkretisme Jawa-Islam.* Jogjakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 2001.

Schimmel, Anne Marie. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam.* North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978.

Simuh. *Sufisme Jawa Transformasi Tasawuf Islam Ke Mistik Jawa.* Jogjakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 1995.

Teeuw, Andries. *Indonesia: Antara Kelisanan Dan Keberaksaraan.* Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1994.

Teeuw, Andries. *Khazanah Sastra Indonesia.* Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1982.

Zuhairi, Ahmad, Mohd Yusof, Hariza and Muhd Nor, Nizamiyyah. *Amalan Mistik dan Kebatinan Serta Pengaruhnya Terhadap Alam Melayu.* Petaling Jaya: Tamadun Research Trust, 1999.

Notes

[1] Also see, Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, *Tasawuf: Menguak Cinta Ilahiah.* Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 1987. 25; Martin Lings, *Ada Apa Dengan Sufi.* Jogjakarta: Pustaka Sufi, 2004. 3–23; Qasim Ghina, *Tarikh Tassawufil Islam.* Cairo: Maktab Nahdah al Misriyyah, 1970; Abu Bakar Atjeh. *Pengantar Sejarah Sufi dan Tasawuf.* Bandung: Penerbitan Tjerdas, 1962; Arthur John Arberyy, *Sufism An Account of the Mystics of Islam.* London: George Allen Limited London, 1950. To understand "Javanese Sufism" refer to Simuh, *Sufisme Jawa Transformasi Tasawuf Islam Ke Mistik Jawa.* Jogjakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 1995. 69–84.

[2] Refer especially to Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *Ensiklopedia Tematis Spiritualitas.* Bandung: Mizan, 2003. 339–376. The book is very helpful overall in understanding the "Sufi literature," as it provides a broad overview of the development of mystical literature from the Arab world, Africa, Turkey and the Malay world.

[3] Besides the reference, also see Syed Muhammad Naguib al Attas, *Islam Dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu: Suatu Mukadimah Mengenai Peranan Islam Dalam Peradaban Sejarah Melayu-Indonesia, dan Kesannya Dalam Sejarah Pemikiran, Bahasa dan Kesusasteraan Melayu.* Petaling Jaya: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, 1990.[1] See Simuh, *Sufisme Jawa Transformasi Tasawuf Islam Ke Mistik Jawa.* Jogjakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 1995: 17–20. Also see Suripan Sadi Hutomo, *Sinkretisme Jawa-Islam.* Jogjakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 2001. This book highlights the influence of oral literature of Javanese Sufism in Java. For further reference, see Purwadi, *Tasawuf Jawa.* Jogjakarta: Penerbit Narasi, 2003.

[4] See for example Kautsar Azhari Noer, *Ibn al-Arabi.* Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995. 4. Or see Ahmad Zuhairi, Hariza Mohd Yusof and Nizamiyyah Muhd Nor, *Amalan Mistik dan Kebatinan Serta Pengaruhnya Terhadap Alam Melayu.* Petaling Jaya: Tamadun Research Trust, 1999. 1–19, 177–193. This last book is a study that rejects the teachings of Javanese Sufism and regards the influence of Javanese mysticism as errant.
[5] A good reference for this subject is the writings of A. Teeuw. He added that a non-Javanese reader would find it difficult to understand works by Danarto or Kuntowijoyo. See Andries Teeuw, *Indonesia: Antara Kelisanan Dan Keberaksaraan.* Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1994. 192–223. And, by the same author, *Khazanah Sastra Indonesia.* Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1982.